

## LITERATURE.

## REVIEW OF NEW BOOKS.

"Strife" is the title of a romance by Mrs. E. D. Wallace, the author of the play of *Little Dorrit*, of a series of interesting and graphic European letters which appeared in the columns of a contemporary, and of other essays and sketches which have obtained favor with the public, but which have not slight indications of the peculiar talent that has been brought to bear in the production of this her first sustained work of fiction. "Strife" is a most peculiar and most puzzling story, that will be certain to attract much attention, to excite discussion, and to meet with emphatic commendation at the hands of many who will either be unable to place themselves *en rapport* with the author or too indolent to bend their minds to unravelling the subtle metaphysical thread of the simple yet complex plot. The book is full of faults, which are so palpable that the most superficial reader cannot but be impressed with them, while the beauties are frequently beneath the surface, and require to be searched for with some degree of diligence, but whatever may be said of it *pro et con* in other respects, no one can deny that it has the rare merit of originality. A truly original work of fiction is a rarity in these novel-producing days, when the press annually turns out its thousands of volumes, in which the joys and woes of humanity are treated in every conceivable style. Indeed, the very superfluity of positively good fiction is an embarrassment to a writer, and it is next to impossible to avoid travelling over ground that has been thoroughly explored before. Mrs. Wallace, however, has succeeded in striking out on a path of her own, and such resemblance to previous performances that occasionally strike the reader in turning over the pages of "Strife" are too faint to invalidate in any way its claim to originality. We warn at the outset those who may be disposed to take up this romance, that it will not repay a merely superficial perusal, and that the common run of novel-readers, who esteem the story-teller's art only for the facilities it affords them for dissipating *ennui* and killing time agreeably, will derive but a small amount of satisfaction from it. It must be read carefully or not at all, and it will frequently be necessary to turn back in order to pick up a dropped thread, to read a sentence more than once in order to discover its meaning and its connection with the context, and to allow the imaginative faculties full play in order to be placed in sympathy with the finer elements of the story.

It is not possible within the limits of a newspaper article to give such a description of "Strife" as would be satisfactory, and the best we can do is to commend its perusal to our readers, with the assurance that while many of them will be pleased, many will probably find themselves no nearer to a solution of its mysteries at the end of the last chapter than they will be at the end of the first. The story is autobiographical, and upon the heroine "Minnette" the author has lavished all her skill. "Minnette" is a dreamer of dreams, and she allows the events of her life and her course of conduct at the most critical moments to be influenced not merely by her visions, but by the impressions of a peculiarly delicate and sensitive nervous organization. The character is a puzzle in the book just as it would be in real life, and that many persons will find it incomprehensible is no proof of its want of fidelity to nature. On the contrary, we conceive "Minnette" to be a peculiarly fine and subtle psychological analysis, and many of the strange features of the story scarcely appear strange because they are so much in harmony with the character of the relator. The plot of "Strife" is not intricate, but it is somewhat difficult to follow. The attentive reader, however, will not fail to notice that it is conducted with much skill and that the peculiar development is quite an artistic masterpiece. The scene of the story is laid in Germany and Italy, and Mrs. Wallace's travels in those countries has enabled her to bring facts as well as actual impressions to the aid of her imagination in the descriptive passages. In the twenty-first and several subsequent chapters there is an account of a night flight from Sorrento, in which the leading personages escape in disguise from the officers of the Papal Government, that is exceedingly graphic, and the account of the wedding of the heroine in the twenty-seventh, and of a mutiny of Garibaldians in the Abruzzi which succeeds in the thirty-first, are evidences of the descriptive abilities of the author. The great fault of the story is a want of definiteness in its outlines. This comes in some degree from the peculiar character of the heroine and from the fact that the narrative is autobiographical. There is no doubt, however, that "Strife" would be more likely to find favor with the mass of readers if its purpose were more clearly set forth. As a very original and very meritorious work, however, we give it a cordial welcome, and hope that its success will be such as to encourage the writer to supplement it by other attempts in the same line. Published by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger.

"Light" is the title of the second volume of the series entitled "Science for the Young," by Jacob Abbott, in course of publication by Harper & Brothers. The various phenomena of light are described very thoroughly, and in a clear and popular style for which Mr. Abbott is famous. A clear and comprehensive account is given of the results of modern investigation and discovery, and the book is one that adults as well as young people will find both interesting and instructive. For sale by Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger.

"Six Boys" is a story of a widowed mother upon whom is imposed the care of training six boys of diverse character and taste, and her trials and tribulations, her hopes and joys, are set forth in such a manner

as to secure the sympathies of young readers, to whom the story is particularly addressed. The third series of "Bible Sketches," by Samuel B. Green, B. A., relate in familiar style, for the edification of young people, the leading incidents of Christ's life, with illustrations calculated to impress the minds of those for whom the book is particularly intended.

Both of the above-mentioned works are from the Riverside press of Hurd & Houghton, and are published by the American Tract Society.

The June number of *The Proof Sheet*, published by Collins & McLeester, contains a sketch of our Democratic contemporary the *Age*, with other interesting matter.

The *Penn Monthly* for June, published by Porter & Coates, contains several ably-written articles and some excellent book reviews.

The June number of *The Journal of the Franklin Institute* is filled with valuable and interesting practical and scientific papers which discuss the latest discoveries, inventions, and investigations.

The June number of *Our Schoolboy Visitor* presents an attractive array of stories, sketches, and poems suited to the tastes of young readers.

The *Cochran's International Journal* for June contains a number of practical articles of interest to the coach-making fraternity.

From the Central News Company, No. 505 Chestnut street, we have received the May number of *The St. James Magazine*.

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## LEGAL NOTICES.

IN THE DISTRICT COURT FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA.

FISHER et al., Executors, vs. PATTERSON.

Levied Facias. March Term, 1871, No. 1089.

The Auditor appointed by the Court to report distribution of the fund arising from the Sheriff's sale under the writ of all that certain lot of ground, with the message of the Sheriff's return erected, situate on the north side of Arch street, at the distance of 99 feet 4 inches east of Seventeenth street, in the City of Philadelphia, containing in front on Arch street 30 feet 1 1/2 inches, and in depth southward that width 150 feet to Ann street, will meet the parties interested for the purpose of his appointment on MONDAY, June 12, 1871, at 4 o'clock P. M., at No. 202 S. FIFTH STREET, in the City of Philadelphia, when and where all persons interested are requested to make their claims, or be debarred from coming in upon said fund.

T. BRADFORD DWIGHT, Auditor.

## IN THE ORPHANS' COURT FOR THE CITY AND COUNTY OF PHILADELPHIA.

The Auditor appointed by the Court to audit, settle, and adjust the account of JOHN MELLON, administrator de bonis non of JAMES QUIGLEY, deceased, and to report distribution of the balance in the hands of the accountant, will meet the parties interested for the purpose of his appointment on TUESDAY, June 13, 1871, at 1 o'clock P. M., at No. 202 S. FIFTH STREET, in the City of Philadelphia.

INMAN HORNOR, Auditor.

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